

NAVY Future of the Fleet **RECRUITER**

Mobile Engagement Vehicles Deploy Nationwide

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CNRC and Sea Cadets Partner to Develop America's Youth

Pages 10-11



From the Admiral

Rear Admiral Dennis Velez
Commander, Navy Recruiting Command



Recruiting Nation,
Happy New Year! I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday season, and were able to spend time relaxing with family and friends.

I want to remind each of you how proud I am of your efforts. Despite a myriad of challenges, I see the work you are putting in and I couldn't have more respect for our team. I hope the holidays gave you a chance to recharge, and that you are ready to forge ahead into this new year. To help you with that, my staff and I have been focused on developing programs and policies to make your jobs easier.

At the start of my second year, I published my list of priorities, and I am very happy with how we are progressing. One of the biggest shifts you will see is with Transformation 4.0. We are adjusting our organizational structure by moving to a single TAOC for each NTAG with detachments in Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Salesforce Mobile App and iPads will be coming this year. This will revolutionize the way our recruiters execute their daily responsibilities. The app will automatically track phone calls, text messages, and emails conducted through the mobile app. I am confident that these tools will improve the Future Sailors' customer experience, and decrease the amount of time recruiters spend on administrative tasks.

Phase I of Station Classification is in execution with the goal of allowing some of the classification roles to happen at the recruiting station. This initiative will buy back efficiencies in our recruiting process by minimizing trips to MEPS, improving the experience for our Future Sailors while saving recruiters' time.

NTAGs continue to improve their working relationships with local Naval Sea Cadet units. Knowing that 60% of Sea Cadets enter military service and between 8-12% of Midshipmen entering the Naval Academy were at some point in Sea Cadets or similar youth groups, it remains vital that we strive to keep Navy the service of choice for these talented youth.

In addition to these efforts, we are standardizing onboarding and adding Recruiter Professional Development classes at NORU. Also, we are constantly updating the e-toolbox, so please continue to use that resource. Recent additions include an Aerial Vehicle Operator Fact Sheet, the PRS Portal Guide, NORU videos, and an NROTC classroom presentation. Train one another to use the tools that are available in order to be more effective in your day-to-day roles.

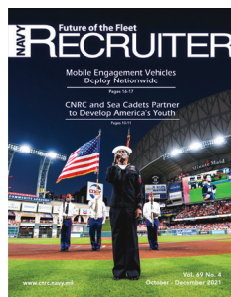
I am excited to push forward with these initiatives while also continuing to identify other ways we can improve the recruiting experience for each of you and our Future Sailors. I see many suggestions for ways we can improve and I take each one seriously. I am committed to the betterment of our Force.

I look forward to seeing what this year holds for us..

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Velez'.

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez

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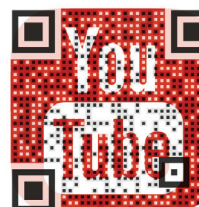
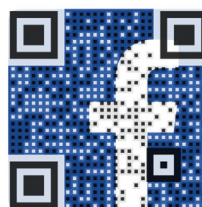
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Navy Recruiter encourages the submission of "Letters to the Editor" and articles expressing the opinion of individuals in the Navy recruiting community. All submissions must be signed. Send submissions to: elijah.g.leinaar@navy.mil

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CNRC and Sea Cadets Partner to Develop America's Youth

**Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cody Anderson,
Navy Recruiting Command Public Affairs**

MILLINGTON, Tenn. -- Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) Rear Adm. Dennis Velez recently released his 15 priorities for his second year in charge of NRC. Among them is more engagement with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC).

"We recognize that the Sea Cadets is a youth organization dedicated to developing individuals with a high propensity to serve," said Velez. "Through presence and engagement with local Naval Sea Cadets units, we hope to serve and strengthen the bonds within our communities."

Velez's vision is that the leadership at each Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) directly engages with the leadership of any NSCC unit that falls within their area of responsibility, so a direct channel of communication is established between them. Through this engagement, NSCC units would be able to leverage local naval recruiting stations (NRS) for support and volunteers when needed. Navy Recruiting encourages Sailors volunteering their time to consider their local NSCC as an option to give back in their communities.

"The opportunity for our Sea Cadets to interact with Navy recruiters gives our young men and women a great opportunity to learn about the Navy, and to get motivated about it, and learn what it would be like to serve," said Rear Adm. (ret.) Andrew Lennon, executive director of NSCC. "We've got 400 Sea Cadet units around the country that are just super engaged with our communities, with our American Legion posts, Veterans of Foreign War posts and Navy posts; and our adult volunteers are always looking for opportunities for our cadets to get engaged

in the community. First and foremost, I want our Sea Cadets to have fun and enjoy what they're doing, to feel good about being part of the Sea Cadet team! If we can have our young men and women challenge themselves and become better and more confident people - it will help them become better adults."

The NSCC is a nationally recognized military youth leadership development program with more than 400 units throughout the United States, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Guam. The organization's core values mirror those promoted by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard and reflect their mission and vision. The organization also actively trains its participants in the customs and courtesies of the Navy along with basic seamanship, watch standing protocol and physical fitness. Also included under the Naval Sea Cadet Corps umbrella is their junior program, the League Cadet Corps, for youth ages 10 to 13.

Basic acclimation to the military is one of the many benefits that participation in the Sea Cadets provides. Cadets who enlist in the armed services are often eligible for military advanced pay-grade programs, which can result in advancement of two pay grades in some services. The Sea Cadets program has also had a positive impact on some prospective special programs' applicants, with more than 10 percent of the midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy being former Sea Cadets.

Although the program is designed around developing the youth involved, the volunteers also mutually benefit.



▲ U.S. Naval Sea Cadets Corps Fort McHenry Division cadets participate in a pull-ups challenge as part of the Navy's virtual reality asset the "Nimitz" during the Navy Promotional Days (NPD) Baltimore. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)



Lt. Cmdr. Rolando Machado Jr. has intermittently volunteered with the organization for more than seven years and he believes the symbiotic dedication to the program by both volunteers and students results in reciprocating gains.

“Engaging with Sea Cadets is one of the most inspiring things I do for community service. These students have a desire to better themselves, dedicating time outside of school to develop skills that will be applicable as adults,” said Machado. “The biggest personal return for me is when their eyes light up and you can see that they now see themselves in you. That is what it’s really about. Once I become a role model for them and they can see themselves wearing my rank, or having my responsibility as a Naval Officer, I know that this path, which may have seemed insurmountable for them before, is now possible and attainable for them. And that is really the genesis for them to someday be my relief leading Sailors at sea.”

While some Sailors have engaged with NSCC during their career, others are experiencing their first opportunities to volunteer with the organization. Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class Shea Fehringer, a member of NRC’s First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA), began volunteering with the local Sea Cadet division, BB-43 USS Tennessee. She said she initially got involved because she was looking for a way to have a positive impact on teenagers and possible future Sailors.

“The reason I reached out to the Sea Cadets as a CNRC FCPOA member was to give our Sailors an opportunity to volunteer in a leadership role with the possibility of becoming more involved as a drill instructor within the program,” said Fehringer. “Through volunteering, the Sea Cadets can learn about what the actual Navy

▲ A U.S. Naval Sea Cadets Corps Fort McHenry Division cadet uses the Navy’s virtual reality asset the “Nimitz” during the Navy Promotional Days Baltimore. During the event between USNSCC, Navy Recruiting Command and NTAG Philadelphia, cadets participated in physical training with local recruiters, conducted service training and experienced the “Nimitz.” (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)

is like. We can tell them what deployments are like, what the different rates are and what opportunities and experiences Sailors get from being active duty.”

While many who have served might be more likely to volunteer with the program, prior service is not a requirement, leaving some Sea Cadet squadrons without the real-life experience of Sailors who have been to the fleet. With a new commitment to the program being emphasized by NRC, members of the Sea Cadets are looking forward to more direct engagement with their active-duty components. For Sea Cadet Lt. j.g. Andrea Thomas, the commanding officer of Fort McHenry Division and Training Ship Constellation, the support from headquarters represents an investment in the future.

“Sea and League Cadets is an excellent youth organization for both young men and women to learn and demonstrate leadership skills, build confidence within themselves, learn their strengths and receive opportunities for improvement,” said Thomas. “Investing in our young people helps benefit a better future for all of us.”

To find a Sea Cadets unit in your area, see ways in which you can get involved, or to learn more about the volunteer opportunities with the Sea Cadets, visit www.seacadets.org.

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, and 26 Navy Talent Acquisition Groups that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations across the world. Their combined goal is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America’s Navy.

For more news from Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, go to <http://www.cnrc.navy.mil>. Follow Navy Recruiting on Facebook (www.facebook.com/MyNAVYHR), Twitter (@USNRecruiter) and Instagram (@USNRecruiter).

▼ Hospital Corpsman 1st Class David Cooley, a New York native, medical officer recruiter assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group Philadelphia, speaks to a U.S. Naval Sea Cadets Corps Fort McHenry Division cadet about career opportunities in America’s Navy during the Navy Promotional Days Baltimore. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)



CNRC Sailor Scares Neighbors Into Donating to St. Jude



Story and Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cody Anderson

ARLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) – 364 days of a normal year, oncology nurse Lt. Cmdr. Michael Lanier is a calm and caring, Arlington resident serving his nation as a program manager for medical accessions in the Navy. However, one night a year, Lanier transforms into the Scaremeister, a demented, chainsaw wielding doctor who is intent on delightfully terrifying his neighbors and those who are brave enough to venture to his home of horrors.

Over the past three years, Lanier has constructed a haunted house that operates one night a year on Halloween with the mission of raising money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Lanier's journey into becoming a "Pumpkin King" began simply and innocently enough. One day when arriving home from work, Lanier noticed his wife, Jenn, had put up some small decorations, and it inspired Lanier to want to create something more. Before this simple action, Lanier had no inclination towards running the full-fledged operation that he now manages.

"We had never decorated for Halloween really. We liked Halloween. We dressed up. Kids would come to the door, and I would pretend to be a character," said Lanier. "Then one day I came home, and Jenn had put these dollar store tombstones out, and they were

flopping in the wind. I knew there had to be a way to make them sturdier and look more realistic, and that's how it started."

From that moment, Lanier then began searching for ways to improve and expand upon those simple decorations. He joined different haunt groups on social media and began watching online videos of like-minded decorators who wanted to optimize their own set-ups. After becoming an enthusiast, Lanier and his family grew their collection of decorations, adding onto their set-up each year.

Lanier says the project really started to grow in 2015 when he and his family were stationed in California. That year, he and his family set up static displays that allowed their neighbors to come up and interact with different scenes. It was during this time that Lanier first got the taste of the scare.

"It was just in the garage, and I would scare-act off the side," said Lanier. "I would just come around the corner and say 'Boo!' to people when they were looking to push the button on the animatronic, and it evolved into adding more and more."

Over the next four years, Lanier's hobby grew, and in 2019, his family designed and ran the very first iteration of the haunting as it is today in Arlington.

"I had told my wife, 'Let's just do this. Let's go

crazy.' We decided I was probably going to retire, we were going to stay here and grow some roots, grow old. My son, Tristan, loved his school," said Lanier. "We decided to build the dream [haunted house] I've always wanted. We did it, and that first year, we had \$614 raised and over 700 people who went through the haunted house. We were super stoked to do it."

The following January, after the initial success of their first annual haunted house, Jenn began exhibiting flu-like symptoms. The Lanier's neighbors had recently had the flu, so they had no reason to believe that Jenn's situation was any different.

"The kids across the street were having the flu-like symptoms," Lanier said. "They told us that it was really bad, and that it was lasting about two weeks."

Unbeknownst to the family, Jenn was suffering from toxic shock syndrome – a life-threatening infection that results from the toxins of certain bacteria entering the body. Lanier's wife had gotten a fever on Sunday and then passed away that next Saturday.

After the tragedy of losing his wife so suddenly and unexpectedly, Lanier had little will to do much of anything. Drifting in a grief-laden fog, he did his best to continue through life, going through the motions of all that was required of him, having little mental or physical energy to do much else.

Shortly after, the pandemic began to take hold of the world, forcing the family into isolation, which further complicated their grief. Then in the week before Halloween of 2020, Lanier dreamt of his wife who gave him a metaphysical pep-talk, and suddenly he was compelled to continue their work. Although he was unable to build a full haunted house in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic, Lanier still put up static displays which his neighbors happily came to visit. This was also when Lanier decided that the house would be dedicated in memory of his wife. That year, Lanier raised more than \$1,600 for St. Jude.

"I want to show Tristan that even in the darkness, you can still be a light for someone else," Lanier said. "Even though this tragedy happened to us, this thing we do is for the community. It's for people. It's for St. Jude. His mom would want us to do it, so that's why we do this."

In his community, Lanier's haunt has become an event that families, friends and neighbors look forward to every year. On Halloween night 2021, Lanier's yard and driveway was filled not only with the pumpkins and tombstones, but also the laughs, smiles and chatter of excited neighbors and families who were receiving candy and waiting to be scared. As the show only happens on Halloween night each year, Lanier's haunt has become a must-not-be-missed production. As the night progresses, the line to visit the house slowly begins to snake around the block with some visitors happily waiting for hours to partake in the experience. For Lanier, that is one of the ways where he says his efforts have succeeded.

"There's so much laughter, and they're building memories. Families come year after year because they love it so much, so I have to do it," said Lanier. "That's why we have it so big now. We've worked so hard. That's why I do what I do."

For Fred Smithwick, a resident of a nearby neighborhood, Lanier's haunted house was the first stop of the night, ensuring he and his family would be able to experience the haunt before they commenced their trick-or-treating. Smithwick said one of the reasons they went out of their way to make it to the house is because it is a fundraiser for St. Jude.

"We came out here just for the haunted house, but we're going back to our neighborhood for trick-or-treating," said Smithwick. "It was really impressive. I honestly cannot believe the amount of work they've put into it. It looked really awesome."

As of the past three years, Lanier has raised more than \$5,200 through his efforts for St. Jude and has provided a unique experience for more than 2,600 of his neighbors. Lanier says he'll continue the haunted house as long as possible as it serves as a tribute to his late wife Jenn. If you would like to donate to St. Jude or learn more about the organization, please visit www.StJude.org.



▲ Lt. Cmdr. Michael Lanier, a program manager for medical accessions at Navy Recruiting Command, scares people waiting in line to enter his haunted house.

Sea Cadets Live a Day in the Life of a Firefighter

Story by Creative Writer Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command



▲ Sea Cadets from the TN-BB43 division in Millington take part in fire fighting training exercises on November 6. The United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps is an organization sponsored by the Navy to teach individuals about U.S. naval operations and training, sea-going military services, community service, teamwork and discipline. (Courtesy photo.)

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) – Naval Support Activity (NSA) Mid-South Fire & Emergency Services and Commander, Navy Recruiting Command First Class Petty Officer Association (CNRC FCPOA) hosted an event for sea cadets at their fire training facility in Millington, on Nov. 6. At the event, firefighters taught safety instructions to the sea cadets and supervised them while they performed several exercises, such as live fire extinguisher training, firehose spraying and a house evacuation drill complete with a smoke machine.

The United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) is an organization sponsored by the Navy to teach individuals about U.S. naval operations and training, sea-going military services, community service, teamwork and discipline. It consists of two programs – one for cadets ages 10 through 13 and the senior program for cadets ages 13 through 18.

“The purpose of this event was to let the

sea cadets come and experience the day in the life of a firefighter,” said Lt. Ronald Richardson Jr., lead firefighter of NSA Mid-South Fire & Emergency Services in Millington. “We set up different stations for hands on and also had a station tour for the little cadets as well. This benefits our fire department by reinforcing our community relations. It is real good for our fire prevention program as well for us to work with the public teaching fire safety to the kids. I think that demonstrating what our job entails gives the kids a newfound respect for our profession. It helps them to be better aware of all the dangers of fire and to be better prepared if they do encounter it. It also gives them a snapshot of our job as well to see if they might want to pursue a career in firefighting.”

For Lt. j.g. Henry Smith, commander of TN-BB43 division of the USNSCC in Millington, the event was part of their training module that teaches cadets about shipboard

battle stations and damage control, but it was also an opportunity for much more.

"By having a presence there, Navy recruiting provides the crucial link between how these tasks/jobs translate to Navy life," Smith said. "The cadets get realistic training, and it opens their eyes to the importance of safety [and] prevention and also gives them tools to be more calm [and] proactive during an emergency."

The importance of Navy recruiting being at such outreach events cannot be overstated. Sonar Technician (Surface) Petty Officer 1st Class Shea Fehringer, who is in charge of community relations for CNRC FCPOA, saw the benefits firsthand, which made the legwork she put in all the more worth it.

"I was so excited to head up this event," Fehringer said. "Having already been working with the sea cadets, I reached out to the NSA Mid-South Firefighting department to see if we could organize hands on training for the cadets. I worked with ENS Noble and Fire Chief Richardson to organize the event, which included scheduling the stations of that day, assisting the cadets in gaining access to base, taking photos of the event and ensuring strong communication between Sea Cadet leadership and NSA Mid-South firefighters. It is one of the admiral's priorities and helps maintain the sea cadets' interest in joining the Navy. It also helps bring Sailors and prospective Sailors together in a fun learning environment."

Fehringer continued speaking about her sea cadet experience with enthusiasm.

"Being able to watch the kids go from scared and thinking they can't do one of the events, to doing it and realizing they could do it was great," Fehringer said in regard to what she considered to be the event's highlight. "Overcoming the fear of thinking you can't do something is empowering and shows you that limits are arbitrary."

The training for the sea cadets was very beneficial and had something to offer everyone who participated. After the event, Richardson Jr. stated the NSA Mid-South Fire Department is looking forward to similar events in the future, but the positive impact of the event had a ripple effect that continued long after the event was over.

"As commanding officer of TN-BB43, I really want to highlight the great job that the NSA Mid-South Fire & Emergency Services did in preparing and executing this training," said Smith. "I have had parents calling me all week expressing their appreciation for the training and how much their cadets enjoyed it. I encourage our Millington naval community to embrace these young people. Each one is excited about the unit and love coming to our drill weekends because of partnership activities like these."

With ongoing partnerships and exciting opportunities to show America's youth what the Navy has to offer, the Navy's recruiting efforts will continue to educate people and positively change lives while growing the world's greatest naval force.

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U.S. NAVY RESERVE



Blue Angels Select Executive Officer for 2020 Air Show Season

Story by Chief Petty Officer Chad Pritt

and served previously on the Blue Angels team as the events coordinator. Following Royles' transition to the Selected Reserve, he reported to Training Squadron 86 aboard NAS Pensacola where he currently serves as the executive officer. Royles will join Cmdr. Brian Kesselring to lead the Blue Angels in their 2020 season.

"I cannot be more excited to be returning to the team to join Cmdr. Kesselring in guiding this amazing organization through its 74th season," Royles said. "I'm humbled to be welcomed back to this extraordinary group and join them

"I cannot be more
excited to be returning
to the team..."

PENSACOLA, Fla. (NNS) -- Chief of Naval Air Training Rear Adm. Greg Harris announced Cmdr. Todd Royles as the incoming executive officer of the 2020 Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels. A native of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, Royles attended Pennsylvania State University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in administration of justice and received his commission in May 2001.

Royles attended flight school at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola and was then designated a naval flight officer. He received training at Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA-122) in Lemoore, California, to become a Weapon Systems Officer (WSO) in the F/A-18F Super Hornet and completed two Western Pacific deployments aboard aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Royles returned to VFA-122 to serve as an instructor WSO and was on the Super Hornet Tactical Demonstration Team. He is a United States Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) graduate, flew combat missions in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, and Inherent Resolve,

in representing all those in our Navy and Marine Corps to the American public."

Royles will assume his role for the 2020 show season following the Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show at Naval Air Station Pensacola Nov. 9.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.

For more information, contact Blue Angels Public Affairs at (850) 452-3955 or bapao@navy.mil.

For more news from Navy Blue Angels, visit www.blueangels.navy.mil/.

NTAG Houston Sailor Knocks It Out of the Park with National Anthem Performance at World Series

Story by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Joshua Keim and Creative Writer Jordan Smith, Navy Recruiting Command

"Breathe, breathe. Don't mess this up." That is what Operations Specialist 1st Class Giavanni Walker told herself before her third time performing the national anthem for Major League Baseball's Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in her hometown of Houston in 2019. Last night, the 26-year-old Navy recruiter performed the national anthem at the same place ahead of Game 2 of the World Series between the Atlanta Braves and Houston Astros. Before a world-wide television audience, she demonstrated just how much she has grown in a short amount of time as both a singer and a Sailor.

In 2013, Walker joined the Navy in search of new adventures, educational benefits, work experience and a journey around the world. After completing her first tour on an aircraft carrier, she reported to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Houston, where she has flourished as a talent scout, recruiting



"Breathe, breathe.
Don't mess this up."

▲ Operations Specialist 1st Class Giavanni Walker performed the national anthem at Major League Baseball's Houston Astros Minute Maid Park ahead of Game 2 of the World Series between the Atlanta Braves and Houston Astros.

the next generation of Navy leaders. She was recently selected as NTAG Houston's Junior Sailor of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2020, and promoted to E-6 through the Navy's Meritorious Advancement Program (MAP).

"I knew there were young men and women who didn't know what was on the other side of the door aside from the rumors and movies," Walker explained. "I wanted to be someone's light into success like a recruiter was for me."

It was in the Navy where Walker's extraordinary voice and musical artistry could not stay hidden for long. Before she knew it, the entire command had heard her euphonic melodies – vulnerable, eloquent yet powerful.

"Once everyone found out I could sing," she said, "I was singing at nearly every ceremony, program, game and memorial."

The opportunities and praise she received from her fellow Sailors gave her confidence, and now she has her own definition for confidence.

"To me, serving in the Navy means confidence. It means bravery and courage. It means perseverance," Walker said. "Most of all, serving in the Navy has aided me to focus on

more than myself. Serving in the Navy has helped me to help others around me and empathize with people who are willing to serve, but do not meet the requirements or are unable to."

You get what you give, and Walker gives a lot. She has changed lives through her recruiting and singing, but for her, the gratitude is the most rewarding part – knowing that you made a meaningful, positive impact in someone else's life.

"Sailors calling me back after they graduate boot camp and get to their first command to thank me for helping them and guiding them during their transition is the most rewarding part about being a Navy recruiter," said Walker.

The Navy gave Walker the confidence to reach the heights she strived for, and it was on full display during her amazing performance at the World Series.

"It is such an honor for me to see my recruiters making a positive impact on their communities," said Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, Commander of Navy Recruiting Command. "Petty Officer Walker is representing herself and the Navy superbly, and I'm very proud she has been able to use her talent on such a big stage." 🦅

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Eye on the Field



▲ 210908-N-WF272-1171 BALTIMORE (Sept. 8, 2021) A student, attending Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School, participates in the Navy pull-ups challenge during the Navy Promotional Days (NPD) Baltimore. NPDs are a part of the Navy's national search for the best and brightest students who have what it takes to excel in high-demand, cutting-edge fields. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Diana Quinlan)

▶ 211005-N-PA462-0019 SAN FRANCISCO (Oct. 5, 2021) Recruiters from NTAG Golden Gate escort students from Mission High School located in Fremont, California, on a tour of Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47) to kick off San Francisco Fleet week. Young men and women can positively contribute to the American way of life by serving and simultaneously fulfill personal and professional goals. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Meranda Keller)

Eye on the Fleet



▲ 211118-N-RP125-1001 BAUCAU, Timor-Leste (Nov. 18, 2021) Builder Constructionman Dylan Taylor, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 5, secures trusses during construction of a four-room schoolhouse in Timor-Leste. The U.S. Navy Seabees with NMCB-5 are deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific, strengthening their alliances and partnerships, and providing general engineering and civil support to joint operational forces. (U.S. Navy photo by Builder 3rd Class Kacie Joslin)

◀ PACIFIC OCEAN (Nov. 15, 2021) Aviation Electronics Technician Airman Allan Brandau, from Panaroma City, California, signals an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter, assigned to the "Chargers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 14, on the flight deck aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) during a replenishment-at-sea. Abraham Lincoln is underway conducting routine operations in the U.S. 3rd Fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes/Released)

Educators Tour San Diego During NTAG Mid America EOV 2021



Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Williamson, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America

▲ Educators from Missouri, Kansas and Kentucky pose for a group photo with Jon Dickson (second from left), the education specialist at Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America, and Lt. Cmdr. Claudia Alday (far right), the deputy director of Navy Recruiting Command's diversity and outreach department, at Pacific Beacon enlisted housing during an NTAG Mid America educator orientation visit to San Diego.

SAN DIEGO – In an effort to raise Navy awareness and support Navy Recruiting Command's (NRC) recruiting efforts, seven educators from Missouri, Kansas, and Kentucky, along with personnel from Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America, visited several Navy units in the San Diego area for an Educator Orientation Visit (EOV), Oct. 18-20, 2021.

EOVs are an NRC program that provide an actively engaged, compactly organized tour of various Navy commands and platforms to key center-of-influence educators, which serves to increase their understanding of life in today's Navy.

During the EOV, the educators toured the following commands: Pacific Beacon (single enlisted housing), Naval Medical Center San Diego, USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS Spruance (DDG 111), USS Anchorage (LPD 23), Assault Craft Unit (ACU) One, and Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79.

According to Dr. Josh Ladd, the principal of Mount Vernon High School, Missouri, the EOV far exceeded his expectations.

"The EOV tour was spectacular," said Ladd. "It brought to light the wealth of career paths that I never dreamed were possible in the Navy. It gives me a lot of talking points for my students, especially since they're trying to figure out what they want to do with their lives, and for that I've been exceedingly grateful."

Having had a great experience at every Navy unit he toured, Ladd said his favorite part was the speed at which the Navy develops maturity and responsibility in young Sailors.

"I don't believe people fully understand all the different skill sets and leadership one can learn with the Navy," said Ladd. "When I found out that 18 to 21-year-olds are driving aircraft carriers, that was extremely mind boggling. Teaching Sailors that young about

what it takes to be that kind of leader was truly impressive.”

Ladd went on to give a call-out to his fellow educators and principals, stating they should be open to the EOv experience and spread the word to others to take part in it.

“Whether someone is a guidance counselor, a teacher, or an administrator, I ask that they take the opportunity to see what’s here in San Diego,” said Ladd. “It’s our responsibility to pass on information to our students as to what career paths are out there, so I would highly recommend they take the time to make this trip.”

Taking the time to make the trip with Ladd was Austin Andrews, a teacher at Southeast High School in Wichita, Kansas. Austin, agreed with Ladd regarding the level of training and knowledge each individual Sailor has instilled within them.

“I never would have imagined everything that goes into a program or getting a ship underway,” said Andrews. “So, it was great to see things from a different perspective and how everything works. This whole experience has made me wish I was 20 years younger. I would join up in an instant because the Navy is that amazing.”

For Andrews, his most memorable part of the EOv was touring NMC San Diego.

“The one thing that was really special was when we went to the hospital,” said Andrews. “I for one have never performed surgery, so being able to do it on a computer simulation was neat. I like to work with my hands, so it blew my mind when I realized my motor skills translated extremely well to removing a gall bladder. I’m also a builder, so I always see things for what goes into them. Seeing the prosthetic legs and the fabrication lab made me realize the kind of care and oversight that goes into them. In my opinion, it was true craftsmanship.”

Although Andrews had a memorable time on the EOv, he said he only had one regret – that he didn’t get to spend more time in San Diego.

“There was so much to take in in such a short amount of time,” said Andrews. “I blinked my eyes, and it was time to go back home to the Midwest. But I am glad to be going back to Kansas because I want to tell my students there are viable options after high school with the Navy. A lot of kids feel like they don’t have the option to go out and do something great with their lives, but that’s not the case. I constantly tell them ‘Go try it, do it, make it fun.’ And now that I’ve done the EOv, I know the Navy is there for them. I can honestly say that the possibilities and opportunities with the Navy are endless.”

David Armbrust, a chemistry teacher at Hutchinson High School, Kansas, was impressed with the EOv as well, especially

with all the career opportunities the Navy has to offer.

“I learned that the Navy has opportunities for all kinds of young adults,” said Armbrust. “Whether they’re college educated or right out of high school, the Navy has opportunities for people to pursue a rewarding career or even help them get a job in the civilian sector.”

After touring three different ships, Armbrust said his favorite part of the tour was the giant floating city – the Abraham Lincoln.

“I really enjoyed the aircraft carrier and just the overall size of it,” said Armbrust. “I was awed by how massive the ship and crew were and all of its amazing capabilities. It’s definitely a worthwhile asset for the U.S. to have.”

As the EOv came to an end, Armbrust emphasized the Navy would be a great experience for students, especially for those who don’t know what they want to do in life.

“There are students who could greatly benefit from the Navy and all the different opportunities that are afforded to them,” said Armbrust. “They can become a doctor. They can be a photographer. They can learn to be an engineer or even a mechanic. They can learn all those different kinds of skills in the Navy that they can take with them and use for the rest of their life.”

▼ Austin Andrews, a teacher in Wichita, Kan., dons an aircraft survival vest while at Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79 during a Navy Tvalent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America educator orientation visit.





Future Sailor Follows Family Tradition

Story and photo by Chief Petty Officer Joshua Wahl, Navy Talent Acquisition Group New England

▲ Seaman Recruit Ronald Drake, a San Diego native, stands next to his mom, Navy Talent Acquisition Group New England's Chief Recruiter, Sara Drake, after taking the Oath of Enlistment at the U.S. Navy at Boston Military Entrance Processing Station.

BOSTON – (September 9, 2021) Seeking a career path with adventure, lifelong prospects and family tradition, future sailor Ronald Drake enlisted into the U.S. Navy, Sept. 9.

Born in San Diego, Drake moved across five states while growing up as a military child. The experience traveling and the influence of his family helped shape his goals when deciding to join the Navy.


"I knew what I wanted to do," said Drake. "ASVAB prep and support from my family gave me a clear vision to follow my dreams."

Drake said he was excited to develop new skills in the military.

"The Navy was my focus because of all

the different job opportunities they offer," said Drake. "My mom let me do my own thing and said never give up on what you want to do in life."

His mother, Master Chief Navy Counselor Sara Drake, recently transferred from Navy Talent Acquisition Group Miami to join NTAG New England as the Chief Recruiter on Aug. 30, 2021. She accompanied her son during his official swear-in at the Boston Military Entrance Processing Station.

"I am incredibly proud," said Drake. "I want him to be happy with his decision and to be satisfied. I firmly believe that starting this journey with the Navy will give him that." 

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Navy Recruiter, All-Navy Wrestler Aims to Become World Champion

Story and photo by Chief Petty Officer Jessica Vargas, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pacific Northwest

▲ Interior Communications Electrician Second Class Austin Craig, a recruiter assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pacific Northwest and a member of the All-Navy Wrestling Team, holds up a wrestling team coin.

SEATTLE – (September 9, 2021) Interior Communications Electrician Second Class Austin Craig, a native of Monroe, North Carolina, lives his life in pursuit of two goals: to recruit only the most qualified individuals that he would proudly serve side-by-side with and to be an Olympic World Champion Wrestler one day. As a Navy Recruiter assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pacific Northwest and a member of the All-Navy Wrestling Team, Craig dedicates his life to making these goals a reality.

Craig is a Navy special warfare program talent scout. His mission is to find the best and brightest men and women who are ready to commit to one of the toughest training pipelines in the world.

"I am the first line of defense for the Navy's quality, and I hold it to a high standard. I'm looking for the next generation of elite Sailors. Every person I put in the Navy is somebody I would proudly serve

with and I hold true to that," says Craig. When he is not looking for or preparing the Navy's next team of elite warriors, he is training to win an Olympic gold medal as a member of the All-Navy Wrestling team. Wrestling, however, has not always been Craig's passion. As a young athlete, he was passionate about football and track before a spur-of-the-moment decision led him to discover wrestling.

"I was in seventh grade and had finished reading my book assignment twice over when I heard an announcement for anyone interested in wrestling to sign up in the front office," says Craig. "I used that as an excuse to walk around because I was bored."

Little did he realize that this decision would give him a new found passion and change the direction of his life. However, Craig's first year of wrestling did not go very well. Despite being the underdog on the team, he kept a positive attitude and worked hard to get better.

"I lost almost every official match the first year," says Craig. "But I've never been a quitter. I knew I had to overcome a learning curve, so I just went to practice every day and gave it my all. The coaches really honed in on my wrestling style and helped me to get better."

Craig's hard work paid off, and soon he was unstoppable on the wrestling team.

"The next year was a blowout season and I was winning any and every match. It was phenomenal," says Craig.

While in high school, Craig continued to be a successful wrestler and student. As an athlete he also played football, volleyball, and competed in track and field. As a student, he had good grades and was elected as the student body Class President.

"I am thankful for my wrestling career in high school. It molded me. It gave me that passion."

His successes earned him a wrestling scholarship, where he went on to study Pharmacy at Campbell University in North Carolina.

"The wrestling scholarship paid my way through an undergraduate degree, but I was not sure how I would pay for Graduate school," says Craig. "That's when a family friend informed me about the education benefits the Navy had to offer and about the Armed Forces Sports Program. I went to go talk to a recruiter, and I instantly knew that I wanted to wrestle for the Navy."

Craig joined the Navy in 2013, and immediately after graduating from basic training he was laser focused on trying-out for the All-Navy Wrestling team.

"I actually tried to sign up for the wrestling team while I was in 'A' school but was informed that I had to wait until I arrived to my first command," says Craig. "As soon as I reported to my first command, USS Nimitz, the very first question I asked was, how to apply. My first request ever was to attend the All-Navy wrestling try-outs."

Craig's leadership informed him that his priority had to be on being a great Sailor before they would approve his request.

"From that moment, the mission came first, and I was dedicated to being the best Sailor I could be," says Craig. "From learning my job, earning qualifications, and being involved in the command, I had to make sure that my command knew that I am not just here for a paycheck. I am here to contribute to the mission and do my job. But also, I have personal goals that I hope to achieve."

Craig hit the ground running and did everything he could to be the best Sailor he could be.

"I volunteered for everything I could and was very involved. My peers elected me as the President of the Junior Enlisted Association, and I was an assistant command fitness leader," says Craig.

His successes aboard the USS Nimitz paved the way for command leadership to approve his request to try-out for the All-Navy Wrestling team. But, despite his focus and passion, he did not make the team the first year.

"I had never been cut from a team before. I went into the first camp knowing nothing about freestyle or Greco-style wrestling," says Craig. "I could have given up but instead I worked as hard as I possibly could to get better during the off-season. I tried out again the next year and made the team which was a huge accomplishment for me. And every off-season from there I continued to get better."

Craig's first match at an Armed Forces tournament was against a 2012 Olympian. "I lost the match, but I was the only person at the tournament to score on him," says Craig. "That's when I realized that I was not too far away from making the Olympic Team."


Craig's hard work and drive to become a better wrestler led to his selection as Captain of the All-Navy Wrestling team in 2018. But this achievement was still only the beginning.

"I am not satisfied with being one of the best on the Navy team because the ultimate goal is to be ranked nationally, win the Armed Forces Championship, and win Olympic gold."

The All-Navy Wrestling team traditionally gets about 2-3 months of official training or "mat time" every year compared to the other services which receive year-round dedicated training. This means that Navy wrestlers must be self-motivated and train harder whenever they can. Craig's assignment as a special warfare talent scout allows him to train more while still accomplishing his Navy mission.

"When the candidates physically train, and these men and women are athletes, I am right there working out with them," says Craig. "This allows me to get intense year-round workouts instead of the two months I would get otherwise. This is tremendous for me as I train for the upcoming season."

Year-round intense physical training and having the number one ranked US Wrestler and 2020-2021 Olympian, Marine Staff Sgt. John Stefanowicz, as a wrestling training partner, are setting Petty Officer Craig up for success as he embarks on his mission to compete at the next world Olympics.

"I am so thankful for this opportunity and grateful to my leadership and everyone who has supported me along the way," says Craig. "I absolutely love the Navy! I wanted to be a recruiter because I want people to know about all that the Navy has to offer. I used to be the kid that knew nothing about the Navy. Now, eight years later, I have the best job in the world, and I am following my dreams to become the best wrestler in the world." 

Twenty Future Sailors Conduct Joint Service Swear-In During 20th Anniversary of 9/11

Story and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Williamson, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Mid America



▲ Twenty Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America Future Sailors take the oath of enlistment during a joint service swear-in ceremony at Busch Stadium in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

ST. LOUIS – (September 11, 2021) Twenty Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America Future Sailors took the oath of enlistment during a joint service swear-in ceremony at Busch Stadium in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Sept. 11, 2021.

More than 80 recruits from the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard, along with several recruiters from each military branch, arrived at Busch Stadium on the vicennial anniversary of 9/11.

"I am more than humbled to be here representing the U.S. Navy," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Sierra Clark, a recruiter assigned to NTAG Mid America. "I think it's incredible that all the branches came together to commemorate and honor such an important day."

Shortly after making their way through the

security gates, the recruits and recruiters made their way to the batter's eye for the swear-in ceremony. While making their way through the stands, they were met with cheers from a supportive crowd who applauded and waved.

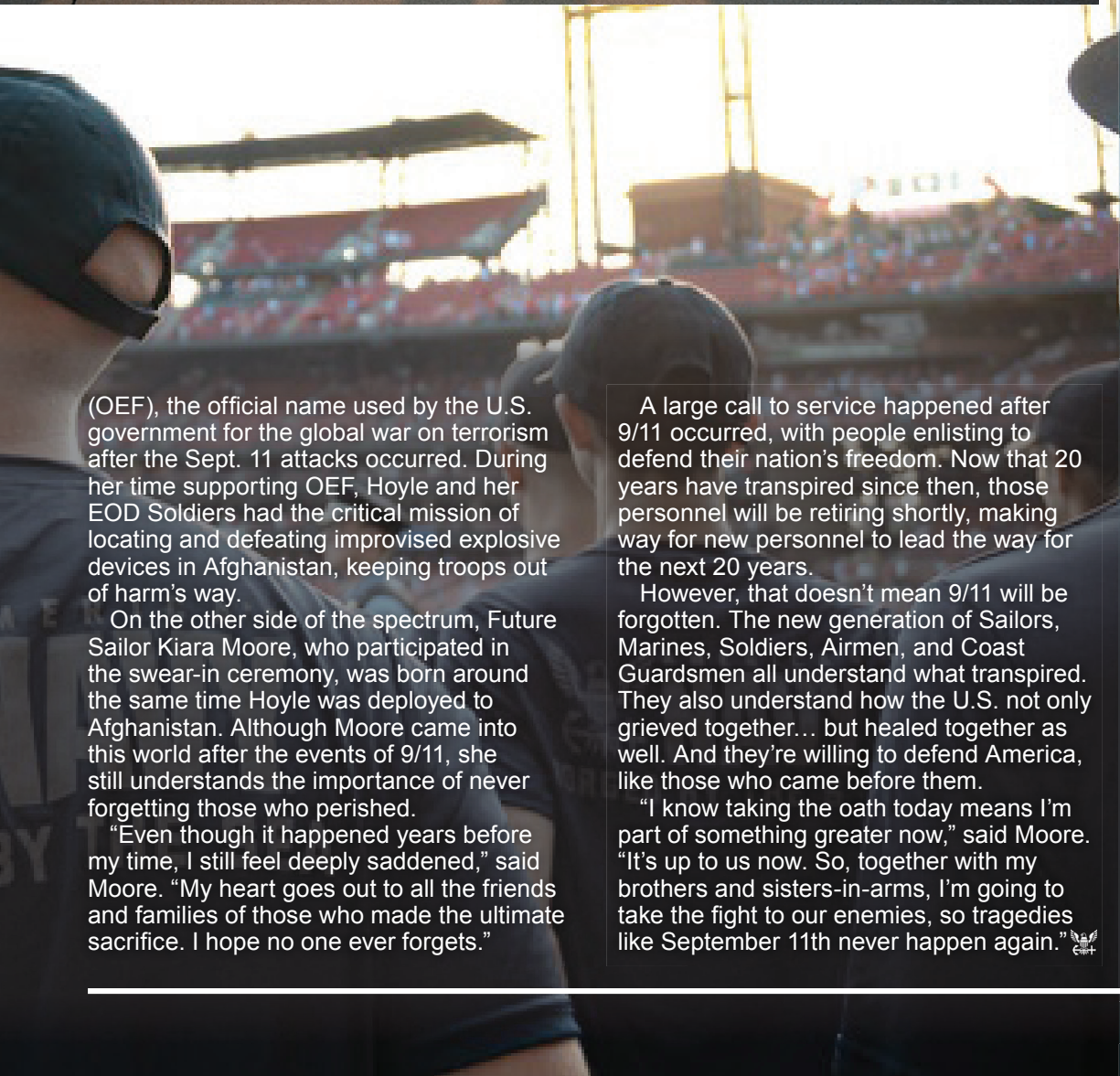
Already in attendance at the batter's eye were approximately 30 members St. Louis police department and fire department members, who were holding an oversized U.S. flag.

After getting into formation according to the respective military branches, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Heidi Hoyle, commanding general of Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, administered the oath of enlistment to the enlistees.

Hoyle, who commissioned in 1994, was the executive officer of the 242nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom



◀ Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 2nd Class Sierra Clark takes a photo with Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Mid America Future Sailors after a joint service swear-in ceremony at Busch Stadium.



(OEF), the official name used by the U.S. government for the global war on terrorism after the Sept. 11 attacks occurred. During her time supporting OEF, Hoyle and her EOD Soldiers had the critical mission of locating and defeating improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan, keeping troops out of harm's way.

On the other side of the spectrum, Future Sailor Kiara Moore, who participated in the swear-in ceremony, was born around the same time Hoyle was deployed to Afghanistan. Although Moore came into this world after the events of 9/11, she still understands the importance of never forgetting those who perished.

"Even though it happened years before my time, I still feel deeply saddened," said Moore. "My heart goes out to all the friends and families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. I hope no one ever forgets."

A large call to service happened after 9/11 occurred, with people enlisting to defend their nation's freedom. Now that 20 years have transpired since then, those personnel will be retiring shortly, making way for new personnel to lead the way for the next 20 years.

However, that doesn't mean 9/11 will be forgotten. The new generation of Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen all understand what transpired. They also understand how the U.S. not only grieved together... but healed together as well. And they're willing to defend America, like those who came before them.

"I know taking the oath today means I'm part of something greater now," said Moore. "It's up to us now. So, together with my brothers and sisters-in-arms, I'm going to take the fight to our enemies, so tragedies like September 11th never happen again."

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NTAG Atlanta Sailors and Civilians Volunteer for Historical Memorial Cemetery Clean-up

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class James R. Turner, Navy Talent Acquisition Group Atlanta Public Affairs.

SMYRNA, Ga. - (Oct 29, 2021) Sailors and Civilians assigned to Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Atlanta volunteered to work with Sailors assigned to Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) Atlanta during the clean-up of overgrowth at historic and hallowed grounds on Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Friday Oct. 29.

In 1942 during World War II, the government bought the Sibley Family Plantation land where Mt. Sinai and Jonesville stood in order to build an aircraft factory and air base. The area was primarily inhabited by freed slaves before the federal government's purchase. After the purchase, the Jonesville/Mt. Sinai community moved on to other locations and the Mt. Sinai Church moved its building to downtown Marietta where it resides today. While the church's physical location moved to another area, the cemetery still remains on what is now called Dobbins Air Reserve Base and is still owned by Mt. Sinai Baptist Church.

The final resting place known as the Jonesville Cemetery is being discovered by many of the group of volunteers as they lend a helping hand to clear overgrowth on the fenced off acre on base.

"Although, NTAG Atlanta does not have an office on Dobbins Air Force base, many of us visit the base frequently to use its facilities," said Operation Specialist 1st Class Charles Clemons. "I have driven by this area countless times and was completely unaware there was a cemetery that belonged to a freed slave community here. I am very proud to be a part of a team that is honoring and showing the respect needed to the 36 plus freed slaves who were laid to rest here."

Mt. Sinai church has worked with the base a few times over the years to maintain the upkeep of the cemetery and this year the base has plans of working with Mt. Sinai to adopt the cemetery in order to have regular access to maintain continuous upkeep of the grounds.

"I feel truly grateful and satisfied with the base's interest to assist us in the process of maintaining the grounds, said Mt. Sinai Church Pastor Pierce Slade. "Our church doesn't have the resources currently and we appreciate all the help we can get. We are having a meeting within the next few weeks to discuss the adoption of the grounds."



The volunteers are committed to reconnecting with the past. After completion of the clean-up, the base also has plans of holding a ribbon cutting ceremony, honoring those who were laid to rest on the grounds during Black History Month in 2022.

"The team's efforts are about honoring and respecting those who were laid to rest in the Jonesville Cemetery," said NTAG Atlanta employee Melissa Grant-Martin. "I volunteered because I feel in my heart, it was the right thing to do. It was interesting to learn the history of the area and I feel that the clean-up is overdue. I look forward to the ribbon cutting ceremony in February."

NTAG Atlanta's area of responsibility includes more than 35 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout 82,000 square miles of Georgia, Alabama and parts of Florida.

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 26 NTAGs and 64 Talent Acquisition Onboarding Centers that serve more than 1,000 recruiting stations around the world. Their mission is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy. For more news from Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, go to <http://www.cnrc.navy.mil>. Follow Navy Recruiting on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NavyRecruiting), Twitter (@USNRecruiter) and Instagram (@USNRecruiter).

▲ Navy Talent Acquisition Group Atlanta Sailors pose for a photo during historic Mt. Sinai cemetery cleanup in Smyrna, Ga, Nov. 10, 2021. NTAG Atlanta's area of responsibility includes more than 35 Navy Recruiting Stations and Navy Officer Recruiting Stations spread throughout 82,000 square miles of Georgia, Alabama and parts of Florida.

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Recruiter Spotlight

Every week, a selected Navy Talent Acquisition Group chooses one Sailor with a special story to tell. We are highlighting them here so people across the country can see who our recruiters truly are. To learn more about these extraordinary Sailors, visit our website at www.cnrc.navy.mil.

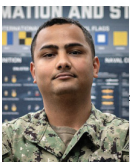
September



Navy Counselor 1st Class Jake Sonnenfeld



Quartermaster 2nd Class Sibina Herrera



Gas Turbine Systems Technician 1st Class Marcus Jones



Interior Communications Electrician 2nd Class Austin Craig

October



Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Berly Lue



Lieutenant Barbara Sterrenberg



Gunner's Mate 1st Class Peter Doyle



Retail Services Specialist 1st Class Andrew Larson



Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Zachary Smith

November



Interior Communications Electrician 1st Class Monica Fulwidervaughn



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class David Cooley



Logistics Specialist 2nd Class David Gritis



Chief Navy Counselor Carmen Vega

